

J. J. BRUNER,
EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

Price of the Paper.

We find it absolutely necessary to ensure ourselves against loss in publishing the paper, to advance the rates of subscription. The price will, therefore, be, from the 7th instant, THREE DOLLARS for Six months. For the present, subscriptions will not be received for a longer time.
December 7, 1863.

THE LESSON OF THE HOUR.

From the Richmond Dispatch.

There are those who regard this as the most dismal and discouraging period of the whole war. The minds of many are in consonance with the sombre aspect of nature. The skies are overclouded, the trees are leafless, the earth is silent, the earth is frozen and seemingly lifeless. We do not deny that this is a serious and even gloomy crisis, and we will admit that not even in the gloomy days of Fort Mifflin and New Orleans were there as much grounds for grave and anxious feeling as now. But what are the causes of this solicitude? They are to be found chiefly in ourselves. It is not that the enemy has gained great military advantages; these calamities can be repaired. It is not that our soldiers have lost their ancient courage; they are the firm and faithful warriors who have on a hundred battle fields borne the flag of the South in victory, and saved the freedom and independence of their country. But, alas! the harmony and mutual confidence that made us once a band of brothers have been rudely assailed, and the demon of discord seems to have full possession of the minds of some of our public men. There are those who seem more intent upon fastening the responsibility and odium of misfortunes upon this and that public agent than upon the means of devising remedy and relief. There are thousands in private life who, instead of devoting themselves body and soul to the salvation of the country, are absorbed in the pursuit of private gain, gambling wildly upon the deck of the storm tossed vessel, whilst the hurricane is howling fiercely through the shrouds, and the roar of the breakers is in their ears. These are the things, more than the power of the enemy, that fill the minds of active and reflecting men with sad and serious thoughts.

We have never been the indiscriminating eulogists of men in power; nor blind to the faults and errors, which they have undoubtedly committed. This journal was never under the old Government, a party journal, and its ancient freedom from party associations is a feature in it which we do not propose to abandon. But to err is human, and we are therefore disposed to make all allowance for the men at the head of our affairs, upon whom such responsibilities have been cast as never before fell to the lot of public men on this continent, and rarely upon public men in the history of the world. The American Revolution was mere child's play compared to the gigantic struggle which is being waged on this continent. Its largest army would scarcely have formed the advance guard of one of our mighty hosts. The combined military and naval power brought against it during the whole war by Great Britain never equalled that which assailed the single town of Vicksburg. A nation has been born in a day, and at the instant of its birth, it has been called upon to do the work of a giant. When we consider the combatants at the beginning of this war, when we bear in mind not only the disproportion of population, and of military and naval armaments, but the deplorable deficiency of mechanical skill and labor in the South, we are filled with amazement at the results which have been accomplished and instead of despairing over the

loss of so much of our territory, wonder, and thank a benignant Providence, that any of it is left. The people and the Government of the South have accomplished more in this war than any other Government mentioned in the annals of mankind. If we had possessed the men and means, if our people had continued patriotic, and if our rulers had been inflexible and never made mistakes, the war might perhaps have been ended two years ago. But who can say that, if it had thus ended, its fruits would not have been lost? Who can say that we might not even now be considering the question of reconstruction? If we had found the independence so promptly and easily obtained, it would have been the first instance in the history of the world where a nation which has obtained its independence with facility has not lost it as easily as it was procured. We do not make these remarks to palliate the political and military blunders which have caused our misfortunes, but to suggest to our people that Providence may have a beneficent design in protracting the struggle, and intend thereby to render our separation from the North complete and eternal.

But, admitting that our Government has committed errors, are not these errors exceptional? Are not its intentions patriotic? Can we single out in our own minds any man who would have done better than President Davis? and who, even if he had avoided the errors which he has committed, might not have fallen into others of equal magnitude? It is easy, after events have transpired, to show what ought to have been done. But, if the Confederate Government has not the gift of foreknowledge, as well as infallibility, attributes which belong only to God, which of our citizens can lay claim to these qualities? And, if the Government has been at fault, can the people show clean hands? Are they blameless? Have they preserved the purity and patriotism which animated them at the beginning of the struggle? On the contrary has not a universal madness for greed and gain seized upon the entire population? Have not the cities run wild with speculation and extortion, and the farmers, once the proverb of disinterestedness and patriotism, demanded such enormous prices for their productions that the efficiency of the army and the welfare of the country have been both put in peril? Who, who can raise his hands at this solemn hour, in all the broad limits of the country, and say he is blameless? What class of Confederates, but the army, can raise their hands to Heaven and say:—Behold them! There is no blood on these hands but the blood of the enemies of the country! there is no pulsation in these hearts but that which beats for her welfare!

In the name of all that is good and holy, for the sake of our firesides and our liberties, let us banish the fell spirit of discord and stand by our country and our Government. No earthly good, nothing but evil, misfortune, ruin, can come from crinations and recriminations. The north has hushed up its internal broils to support a man like Lincoln, who is not the choice of a majority of his people, in the work of subjugating the Confederacy. Can we not support such a man as Davis in the work of defending our hearths and homes? If the wrong man is President, who put him there? Who elevated him unanimously? Let us be charitable to the child of our creation. For our own part, with all his errors, we believe him one of the foremost men of the continent in administrative capacity, and no purer patriot lives. No other man has as much interest as he in faithfully performing his duty. Let us only exercise a generous confidence in him and each other, let Government and people endeavor in the future to avoid the errors of the past, and the future will be as bright and cheerful,

the winter of our discontent will pass away, and a glorious spring rejoice our hearts.

A HELL ON EARTH.

The articles touching the fate of Poland, Ireland, and other oppressed nationalities, which have appeared in recent issues of our contemporary, the *Examiner*, cannot fail to arrest the attention of a people who have been forced at last to contemplate, not without seriousness, a contingency, which, at the beginning of the war, was never mentioned, or if mentioned, excited only derision. Whether our weakness or our mismanagement has brought us to this contemplation, it boots not to inquire. Whether the late legislation in Congress and such speeches as that of Senator Brown, or the lugubrious vaticinations of newspapers, have occasioned the greater depression among the people and the more joyous exultation of the enemy, need not here be considered. Whether the desperate measures advocated on the one side, or the other imperative motives for caution and discretion advanced on the other, be the wiser "policy in war," we shall not stop to discuss. It is enough for us to know that, after three years of terrible warfare, the enemy announces openly his purpose to subjugate us, is making gigantic preparations to that end, and has fixed upon the present year for the consummation of his designs. The time has come therefore for us to examine, in its whole length and breadth, the meaning of this word "subjugation," so glibly used by the Yankees.

In a previous article, based upon a portion of Gen. Lee's last battle order, we attempted to place before our readers an outline of the horrors which would attend the overrunning of this country by the enemy. We cited the deliberate opinion of Gen. Lee, that the "cruel foe seeks to reduce our fathers and mothers, our wives and children, to abject slavery," and we urged the importance of such an opinion, coming from the most truthful and unexaggerating man in the Confederacy. Must the danger of this "abject slavery" be kept before the people? Then the daily act perpetrated by the enemy will serve the purpose, without comment from the newspapers. We need not go to Poland or to Ireland to learn what subjugation means. The fact is before us wherever we turn the eye. In Baltimore, St. Louis, Nashville, Memphis, N. Orleans, we see the first fruits of that unspeakable suffering that must come when the holy cause is abandoned, and nothing intervenes between the brutality of the foe, drunk with excess, and its helpless victims. Nay, we need not go so far as the cities named to find evidence of the enemy's purposes. Look at Fredericksburg, Suffolk, Williamsburg, Yorktown, the Northern Neck and that great desert of ruined farms, that wide extent of eropless, treeless, lifeless land which extends from the Rapidan to the Potomac. But yesterday the citizens of Norfolk, unwilling to give up their home to the Yankees, and afraid to encumber the threatened Confederacy with hundreds, perhaps thousands of women, children and old men, who could render no aid in battle, and only consume the faster our limited subsistence, decided wisely to remain, even at the price of an oath of allegiance to a nation abhorred, but which, in the eye of God, was not, and could not, be made binding by any cunning of the Yankee. And now arms are forced into their hands and they must either fight their own flesh and blood or be shot as deserters. If any young men, who might with propriety have come into our lines, have taken the oath, theirs is a righteous retribution. But if men beyond the proper age are driven into the enemy's ranks, then they deserve the pity of God and man. But their fate should teach all a lesson.

Quite as recently we have proof of the enemy's diabolism in the outrages committed upon the ladies at Elizabeth, in North Carolina. Later still we have the British utterances of *Butler*, calling for the fiercest retaliation, because we refused to treat with him, a declared outlaw, and denounced by the civilized world as an enemy of mankind. Nor have we forgotten that a few weeks ago, within cannon shot of this city, an old man was murdered in cold blood, buried heart-foremost in the common road, and a horrible phreatic left affixed to his protruding feet, as a warning to all who dare defend the honor of their households. All these things are fresh in the public recollection. Other horrors will come trooping day after day. There is no fear that the enemy will leave us any excuse for believing, hoping, or even dreaming of an honorable adjustment on any terms. We must win, or we must submit absolutely and unconditionally to "abject slavery." There is no help for it, even if the Yankees wished it. His war debt must be paid. All the property in the South will not more than pay it. Professions of Unionism will not save it. This has been tried recently by the Tories of East Tennessee, and everything they owned was swept away. When all the property of a people is gone, they are beggars, and beggars cannot be choosers. But why argue the matter?—It is as plain as noon day. We must conquer our independence, or we must become the servants of servants—the slaves, literally, of our slaves and of Yankee fanatics, who will delight to compel us to perform the most menial and disgraceful drudgery. And if this be not a hell on earth, what is, what can be?

MORE TROUBLE.

The indications are that the people of North Carolina are to be again agitated, stirred up and excited this year by "public meetings," gotten up by designing men for the professed purpose of "consulting together for the common good," but really for the purpose of procuring the secession of North Carolina from the Confederacy. Our reasons for saying so are, that the Raleigh Standard has frequently threatened that North Carolina would, on the happening of certain contingencies or the passage by Congress of certain war measures, resume her sovereignty, that is, secede from the Southern Confederacy; and recently the Standard has been advising the people to hold meetings, just as it did last summer. The first one of these meetings held this year, in accordance with the advice of the Standard, met in Johnston county on the 6th inst., at which a long string of untalented and unnecessary resolutions were adopted, winding up by advising Gov. Vance to call the Legislature together. The Standard endorses the proceedings and advises that such meetings be held in the other counties of the State. In this way the people's confidence in our national authorities is to be weakened, opposition aroused, bad feeling and contention engendered among our people, and, we fear, bloodshed caused between those who should be friends in a common cause. We beg those who want peace here at home to abstain from participating in and encouraging factious public meetings. As a friend, as one who wants peace here in North Carolina as well as elsewhere, we warn our fellow-citizens against a course which will involve us in deeper trouble. Now, what is the object in wanting Gov. Vance to assemble the Legislature if it is not to authorize a Convention and to make an effort to secede? We have no idea that the movers in this scheme expect the Legislature to be called together before the regular day fixed for its re-assembling in May next, but their object is to make a show of public opinion before that time so as to induce the Legislature, when it does meet, to call a Convention.

But suppose a Convention were called and the State withdrawn from the Confederacy, would that give us peace? Not at all. It would involve us in a more bloody war and deeper trouble than we have yet experienced. It would cause our armies to fall back from Virginia, and North Carolina would become the battle ground of the contending forces, her fields would be laid waste, the homes of her people would be destroyed, and her women and children made to suffer untold anguish. She cannot occupy a neutral position in this war. Kentucky tried that, and Kentucky is now bleeding and suffering for it.

We want no more secession.—North Carolina united her destinies with the Confederacy and engaged in the war of her own free will and accord, and she must continue to help her sister States and fight it out. It would be both disgraceful and disastrous to attempt to back out now. She cannot even attempt to back out of the contest without involving us in greater bloodshed and distress. She could not now do so if she would, and we do not believe her people would if they could. If more secession is desired by any one, let him wait until after an "honorable peace" is established, and then agitate the question.

It is well known that the public meetings held in this State last summer (called "peace meetings") encouraged desertion from the army and opposition to the Confederate authorities, necessitating the calling out of the Home Guards in many counties, the sending of one or two N. C. Regiments into certain sections to enforce the laws, and causing trouble generally. This was the result of the factious "public meetings" held last Spring and Summer; and now, it seems, that more meetings are to be held and further trouble brought upon us, all to gratify the malice or ambition of some one who wants to be elected Governor, or to array the feelings of the people against the Confederate Government.

We do not want the occasion to arise for ordering out the Home Guards, and calling old men into the field, probably at a busy season of the year; therefore we appeal to the people to discountenance these meetings and frown upon all schemes to divide us and produce discord. We raise a warning voice now while these wicked schemes are in their infancy, and while they may be checked.

We do not allude to this matter for the purpose of getting up a quarrel with any one—we protest against such movements because we sincerely believe they will lead to ruinous and distressing consequences, destroying peace among our own people throughout the State, and, sooner or later, we fear, result in civil war and bloodshed. It is the duty of every public journalist to warn the people of approaching danger, and counsel harmony and concord among those whose liberties, honor and lives are threatened and assaulted by a brutal enemy. At such a time as this it is the duty of every paper and every public man to speak out for unity of action.—*Western Democrat.*

DROWNED.

We learn that Capt. Saml. P. Caldwell, of Cabarrus county, was drowned in Coddle Creek, at Pitts' Bridge, on Tuesday night the 19th inst. He was returning home from Concord, and from some cause unknown, the buggy in which he was riding was thrown off the abutment of the bridge, and he into the water, where he was found dead next morning. He was about 50 years of age, and leaves a wife and four children.—*Western Democrat.*

\$17,000 eight per cent Confederate Bonds were sold in Columbia last week at 117.